

October 29, 1962

**Message from Mexican Ambassador to the
Organization of American States (OAS), Washington,
enclosing memorandum of meeting of US Secretary
of State Rusk with Latin American Ambassadors
from 28 October 1962**

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Summary:

A memorandum about Secretary of State Dean Rusk's declarations during the meeting with the Latin American Ambassadors at the State Department on Sunday 28 October 1962. Rusk makes two points: the crisis situation in Cuba is not settled and nothing of what the United States says and does will alter its attitude towards the pressing situation in Cuba. At the end of the meeting, Rusk says that "the solidarity of the OAS had been a magnificent contribution to peace and that it had made a deep impression around the entire world, especially in Moscow," constituting an appeal for them to be discreet in their declarations to the press given that the situation facing the world continues being delicate.

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Washington, DC
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CONFIDENTIAL

C. Manuel Tello,
Secretariat [Ministry] of Foreign Relations
General Directorate of International Organizations

I am enclosing the memorandum that I have written of the interview that Secretary Dean Rusk granted the Latin American Ambassadors yesterday.

Very attentively,

Vicente Sanchez Gavito,
Ambassador

[document follows:]

MEMORANDUM about Secretary of State Dean Rusk's declarations during the meeting with the Latin American Ambassadors at the State Department on Sunday 28 October 1962

Mr. Rusk began his briefing by referring to the following 3 Soviet documents:

1. - The letter of 26 October, from Mr. Khrushchev to President Kennedy, which Rusk qualified as vague, long and anguished, which says that the USSR is prepared to withdraw weapons of an offensive character from Cuba;
2. - The message disseminated by radio [Moscow on] the 27th [of October] in which Mr. Khrushchev related Cuba with Turkey. Rusk expressed that no connection exists between the two issues; that the United States could not even consider the possibility of putting Europe in danger in order to solve the Cuban situation and that, consequently, the United States decided to reply to the letter of the 26th and not allude to this message of the 27th;
3. - The message disseminated on the morning of the 28th in which the USSR announces that it is prepared to suspend the construction of the bases in Cuba, dismantle them and return the armaments to its territory, all under supervision of United Nations representatives. As a counterpart, the aforementioned power has requested assurances that the United States will not launch an armed attack against Cuba. The Secretary of State reported that his government had accepted this

proposition and that the same terms of the North American agreement are present in the letter from President Kennedy [to Premier Khrushchev] on the 27th of this month (Annex 10 of the complete collection [juego completo] of letters and messages that the Delegation has enclosed for the Secretariat [Ministry]).

Immediately after, the Secretary of State emphasized the following points:

It cannot be assumed that the problem is settled. In the following days it is possible that difficulties may arise. For example, the Undersecretary [Deputy Minister] of Foreign Relations of the Soviet Union, [Vasily] Kuznetsov, is about to arrive at the United Nations "and no one knows what he brings in his briefcase." Castro, in today's speech, refers to "the abandonment by the United States of Guantanamo" and that is even more problematic than the issue of Turkey, because as long as a regime like that of Castro's remains in power, one cannot even take seriously the possibility of modifying "the statute of the referred American base." In summary, the United States has reacted favorably to today's Soviet message, but it remains in a state of alert and will proceed very cautiously.

Nothing of what the United States says and does will alter its attitude towards the pressing situation in Cuba. Next Mr. Rusk reiterated and expanded on this concept, reading the text: "We are not going to give Castro nor any other Cuban regime assurances of any kind that are incompatible with our obligations and with the agreements that we reached at Punta del Este" [in January 1962].

Ambassador Lima, from El Salvador, then took an opportunity to ask for clarifications. Although he was extremely cautious, he gave the impression of being seriously worried about the turn that events had taken. The Secretary of State, in reply, made clear what he had already expressed, saying that the *quid pro quo* had operated exclusively on the terrain of the violence [el terreno de la violencia]: assurances that the United States will not invade Cuba in exchange for the dismantling and return of the offensive weapons to Soviet territory, under the vigilance of the United Nations. With regards to this last issue, he announced that the Secretary General of the United Nations, with a group of numerous experts, will go to Cuba on the 30th of this month. Likewise, he repeated that one should not consider that there had been "a great victory" and that the problem had ended. With regards to the latter, he told us that it is his understanding that there had been changes in the Kremlin over the last two days and that it was important that the position of Mr. Khrushchev did not weaken too much.

With regards to the question of the [El] Salvadorian Ambassador, Mr. Rusk also said that there had been no deals [componendas] or secret arrangements; that the "record" from the letter of 26 October onwards is public.

With regards to the next steps, after making clear that the task of the UN experts does not require review by nuclear physicists, but rather exclusively the participation of engineers and military personnel, Rusk expressed that the "quarantine" will continue while the arrangements are put into practice; that the United States did not believe that incidents would occur since the Soviet ships are already now on their way to their country; and, finally, that the Department of State does not believe that for now there is any need for "formal action" by the Organ of Consultation.

Ambassador [Roberto] Campos, from Brazil, then formulated two questions that served so that the Secretary of State would confirm that the situation on the day before, Saturday, had reached the point of extreme danger and that surely Moscow's knowledge of this had influenced the decision to dismantle the bases. In this part of his briefing, Rusk clearly gave the impression that, the previous day, the United States has been about to bomb the bases. As an example, the following is a transcription of one of his phrases: "Khrushchev yesterday noticed that the situation

was as dangerous as it could ever be and saw clearly that this armament could not remain in Cuba." At this point, he praised Mr. Khrushchev saying that he had revealed "a certain amount of caution" and remembering that he had abstained from issuing ultimatums.

At the end of the meeting, the Secretary of State said that "the solidarity of the OAS had been a magnificent contribution to peace and that it had made a deep impression around the entire world, especially in Moscow." His last words constituted an appeal to his interlocutors for them to be discreet in their declarations to the press given that the situation facing the world continues being delicate.

Washington DC, 29 October 1962.

V.S.G. [Vincente Sanchez Gavito]